



REGERINGSKANSLIET

**Memorandum**

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**Ministry of Agriculture, Food and  
Fisheries  
Stockholm, Sweden**

*Animal Health and Welfare Division  
Senior Administrative Officer  
Aase Tronstad  
Telephone +46 8 405 11 79  
Fax +46 8 405 49 70  
[aase.tronstad@agriculture.ministry.se](mailto:aase.tronstad@agriculture.ministry.se)*

## **Foot and mouth disease in the UK and France**

### ***Background***

Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is one of the most contagious animal diseases known. It affects cloven-footed animals, such as cattle, swine, sheep and goats. The most common symptoms are raised body temperature and blisters in the mouth and between the cloves. The disease is not a threat to human health, although humans can be mildly affected.

FMD is caused by a virus. The infection is readily spread from animal to animal, but can also be spread with the wind and via animal products, such as fresh meat and milk. The virus can also be carried by animal transport vehicles, farm instruments, footwear, clothing etc.

On 20 February, 2001, FMD was diagnosed in swine at an abattoir in Essex, UK. Infected cattle were also found on a farm in Essex. Since then sheep, swine and cattle in over 320 farms in the UK have been infected.

On 13 March FMD was diagnosed in cattle at a farm in Mayenne in Northwestern France. The likely source of this outbreak was said to be a sheep farm 500 meters away, which had imported sheep from the UK. The farm in Mayenne is the only case to date outside the UK.

The latest outbreak of FMD in the EU before February 2001 was in Greece in the summer of 2000. The latest outbreak in the UK was in 1981.

According to a European Council decision affected member states are entitled to economic support from the European Community for control measures in the case of an outbreak of FMD. The European Community covers 60 percent of the member state's costs for recompensating farmers.

### ***European Community Control Measures***

The stamping-out method is used to eradicate the disease. This means that all animals of susceptible species are killed and incinerated on affected farms. Furthermore strict measures are enforced to prevent any transferral of virus from infected areas.

On 21 February the European Commission, through a decision by its Standing Veterinary Committee (SVC), stopped all exports from the UK of live animals of susceptible species and of fresh milk, meat and other products from these species.

On 6 March restrictions were placed on movements of susceptible species in all member states. Transportation to slaughter can take place after permission is granted by the relevant veterinary authority, and under the condition that animals are only collected from one farm at a time and transported directly to slaughter. Movement of animals from one farm directly to another farm can take place after special permission from the relevant veterinary authority. All other transportation of susceptible species is prohibited. All vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected between animals.

On March 13 SVC decided to stop all exports of live animals of susceptible species from France, and to prohibit the export of fresh milk, meat and other products from the districts (Departements) of Mayenne and Orne.

At its meeting on 13 March SVC also decided that horses from the UK must be accompanied by a certificate, showing that they have not been in an infected area during the latest 15 days.

The next meeting of the SVC will be held on March 20.

### ***National measures in Sweden***

Sweden has enforced the decisions taken by the Commission through SVC, and has furthermore taken national decisions regarding pig feed and regarding the movement of horses

On 6 March the Board of Agriculture issued regulations prohibiting the use of swill in pig feed. As a precautionary measure the Board of Agriculture also prohibited the importation of horses to Sweden from countries with FMD.

A number of farmers' organisations have issued the following recommendations to farmers:

Farm visits should only be permitted for personell and professionals, that are necessary to maintain animal health and wellbeing.

Farmers are recommended not to permit visits from study groups.

Increased hygiene and disease controll; change of clothing, disinfection of footwear.

- Visitors from other countries should not be admitted if they have been in contact with cloven-footed animals in countries with FMD during the last five days, or in other countries during the last two days.
- Particular recommendations have been issued for various groups of professioneals.
- Vehicles from the UK must be cleaned and disinfected.
- Exporters of cloven-footed animals are urged to clean and disinfect any animal transport vehicle that has been outside Sweden.

The Swedish Farmers Union advises against all animal auctions.

Swedish Meats har stopped all auctions where animals from several herds are mixed.

### ***Third country reactions***

The present outbreak in the EU has caused some third countries to stop imports from the whole of EU of live animals and animal products.

The European Commission emphasises the concept of regionalisation as a transparent and efficient way to handle the situation and to prevent the spreading of FMD from UK and France to other parts of the Union. Sweden has confidence in the measures taken by the Commission and therefore questions the generalized nature of the measures taken by some third countries.